

U.S. Attorney's Report to the District

Ever since California was carved from Mexican territory in 1846, the state has had close economic, social and cultural ties to Mexico. In some parts of the Eastern District, over half the population has roots in Mexico. The agriculture industry in our region has long relied on labor from south of the border, but Mexico is no longer simply a source of inexpensive labor. It has an increasingly sophisticated economy, with an expanding volume of trade with the United States. The movement of people, products, and crime across the border affects both countries, and our destinies are closely intertwined.

Some of the most violent places in the world today are in Mexican cities along the border, where drug cartels battle each other to feed this country's insatiable appetite for drugs. The flow of guns southward from the United States contributes to the violence. Residents of both countries are endangered, and we have a shared interest in combating the organizations responsible for the violence.

The Department of Justice has devoted unprecedented resources to securing the border and combating Mexican drug cartels. Prosecutions of criminal immigration offenses have been at record levels over the last two years. Assistant U.S. Attorneys nationwide are prosecuting hundreds of cases involving members of the cartels and gangs supplied by the cartels. But only through partnership with our counterparts in Mexico can we be effective over the long term. Improving cooperation with Mexican law enforcement has been an important feature of the Department's strategy towards the southwest border, and that relationship has never been stronger. Ten years ago, Mexico extradited only a handful of defendants every year. In the last three years, Mexico has averaged around 100 extraditions annually, and the United States is now assisting Mexico with extraditions in the other direction. As part of the Merida Initiative, a joint effort to enhance Mexico's capacity to combat narcotics crimes and reform its justice system, the Department of Justice has deployed scores of prosecutors to help train Mexican prosecutors.

Here in the Eastern District of California, we are deeply committed to this effort. Some of our most significant prosecutions are narcotics cases involving members of the Sinaloa and La Familia cartels, and members of violent U.S. – based gangs that are supplied by Mexican drug trafficking organizations. Last month we announced the arrest of members of a firearms trafficking ring that allegedly purchased hundreds of rifles in Madera for resale in Oaxaca. In some of these cases we are communicating directly with our counterparts in Mexican law enforcement. Several prosecutors in this office have recently been to Mexico, either in connection with particular investigations, or to provide training as part of the Merida Initiative. The violence that threatens residents on both sides of the border is deeply rooted, but together with our Mexican partners, we are making steady progress against the organizations that cause it.

If you would like to communicate with our office, contact the main number in Sacramento, or submit a suggestion by clicking on the button below. Thank you.

United States Attorney

Benjamin B. Wagner